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Centre for Sustainable Fashion
Volume 7.0

Transformational Thinking & Practice Field Day Commentary
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**Centre for
Sustainable Fashion**
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ual: university
of the arts
london

Introduction

Four years after its inception, and a great deal of hard work later, we are absolutely delighted that LCF's Centre for Sustainable Fashion has been designated as a University Research Centre. This achievement was marked by CSF's Transformational Thinking and Practice Field Day on 22nd May. The event was designed to explore the centre's work, its core themes and the routes being taken to pursue them through a mixture of presentations and workshops, which you can find out more about [here](#).

Often described as a trailblazer CSF aims to help us understand why sustainability is integral to business building and design innovation. It challenges the fashion status quo by connecting research, education and business to inspire and create innovative approaches to fashion. If the fashion industry is to become more sustainable it must address three key issues: its ecological impact, the plethora of social justice issues associated, in particular, with garment production, and consumerism. Sustainable fashion is about re-thinking the way clothes are designed in order to use up less of the world's precious resources and to ensure the people employed in the industry are paid and treated fairly. All fashion should be led by good design and any brand or designer can be more sustainable in their outlook - this is what the Centre for Sustainable Fashion champions.

Professor Frances Corner, Head of London College of Fashion



'A day spent without the sight or sound of beauty, the contemplation of mystery, or the search of truth or perfection is a poverty-stricken day; and a succession of such days is fatal to human life' - Lewis Mumford

Shared by Deepa Patel, facilitator



AlenStorey
y Orta
Dilys Williams
PhD & MA communities

be followed in the evening with a joint book of
inch of Kate Fletcher and Lynda Grose's
shion & Sustainability: Design for Change
Lucy Orta's Clouds, Versailles.
30 - 8:00pm
5, Ground Floor, Kingly Court
arnaby, W1
open to the Public

elenStorey in preparation for the day.



We'd like to share with you our Field Day commentary to offer you a visual journey along the paths that we are treading in our work.

The day was framed around one of the Centre's themes 'Transformational Thinking and Practice'. As we know, to respond to the ubiquitous challenges of our times, the imbalance that we as people have created in the ecological system as well as within our own societal systems, there is a need for us to create the space in which we can think and act from a different standing point. We need to reference what is going on inside ourselves, inside our communities and inside our collective world.

CSF set out as a gathering of curious people, with a diversity of ideas, to create a dialogue and to share knowledge and experience around fashion and sustainability. Our context was placed in the ecological and social imperatives of our times and the role and scope of fashion to respond to and shape change.

Planting ourselves as hybrid seedlings inside the college grounds, we've proliferated through working with students, governmental organisations, other academic institutions, NGOs and businesses large and small. Working with over a hundred London based fashion design businesses, we've been able to visualise a splendid array of fashion possibilities.¹ Our collaborations have always offered us the ability to be challenged, to form reciprocal dialogues and to have confidence in our approach.

As part of a university, one of the biggest changes that we can make is in the curriculum, in how and what we teach and learn. In establishing the MA Fashion and the Environment, a new culture of critical analysis of fashion has started to emerge. By taking an ecological perspective, we see our part in the ecosystems we inhabit and this understanding can shape how we think and what we make and do. The challenge is to bridge that thinking back into meaningful work that is recognised by today's world.

Our ability to cross boundaries and timescales to explore new territories has been taken to the next level through our integration with fashion science and art disciplines, through world recognised research to engender a cycle of questioning and critique in our own practices, to extend our reach and possibility.²

Taking an approach to fashion based around human actions and interactions; the interdependencies both between others and ourselves and between nature and ourselves we explore fashion as facilitator of restorative practice. This helps to draw us out of a narrow focus on material wealth and instead engages people in active experiences and relationships.

Engaging citizens in action to participate in change and illuminating ingenious social practice that fashion has been oblivious to, has now itself been recognized for its new knowledge generation. This looks at fashion's cultural and social role in creating and playing with identity and connection and its economic and political role in the size and might of its activities. Challenging conventional aesthetics, towards social aspiration of diversity over homogeneity, enlists a variety of disciplines, broadening our approach whilst making us more explicit and analytical in using sustainability as an ideation process to prevent rather than fix ecological and social imbalance.

Dilys Williams, Director, Centre for Sustainable Fashion



1 /These exemplars can we seen through i-sustain <http://i-donline.com/?s=i+sustain>

2/For a full list of CSF community of practive, see www.sustainable-fashion.com

Challenge Conventional Aesthetics

Moving away from limited, isolated aesthetic reference to celebrate beauty in connectedness and diversity across all of nature and human life.

Learn through Making

Enabling action through practice-based experimentation of our ideas as a means to create knowledge, understanding and appropriate application, relevant to time, place and people.

Apply Commons Thinking

Demonstrating the value of the common good and promoting balance between immediate desires and long-term interests of the future.

Guiding Themes: Transformational Thinking and Practice Living Within Ecological Limits Better Lives

Through our endeavours, we seek places to...

Engage Fashion's Intrigue

Exploring sustainability through fashion as conduit of identity, connection and reciprocation and recognising the power of fashion as a social attractor and motivator of change.

Mark Changing Planet

Demonstrating how creativity responds to changing planetary experience and cultural conditions.

Be Viable, Feasible, Desirable

Creating viability through fashion opportunities that regenerate and germinate communities, businesses and environments.

Radicalize Curriculum

Enabling educational spaces that contribute to a world where we can live in fulfillment and balance, by offering tools and techniques to ensure knowledge-based critical thinking and rigorous and appropriate application.

Influence Citizen Action

Activating democratic, creative and visible personal and collective contributions to the ways in which we live, as guardians of the ecosystem, through fashion's ambition to connect and respond.

Be a Voice for Change

Challenging the status quo through academic, public, political and industry dialogue via our community of practice. Speaking truth to power.

Radicalise curriculum: creation of mindful teaching & learning experiences
Nina Stevenson, CSF Education Projects Manager & Deepa Patel, Facilitator

To survive and thrive in a resource-stricken world, our future generations need to behave sustainably, not just know about sustainability. And use ingenuity and creativity to discover new ways of being and interacting that celebrate humankind without jeopardising our critical needs.

In a world where technology supersedes human interaction, a shift from the expected norm in the classroom and the workplace could allow us to reconnect with our own values and motivations. Through contemplative practice such as meditation, mindfulness training places importance on embedding compassion, open-mindedness, patience, respect, and empathy into our everyday thoughts and actions. It invites us to let go of the traditional tutor-student dichotomy to realise that we all are learning and teaching with each other.

This approach to living complements the education for sustainability vision – a place where students and tutors are stimulated to move from responding to feeling, and from being reactive to being intuitive.



Be a voice for change: treasures on the edge
Doctor Kate Fletcher, Reader in Sustainable Fashion

Seeking some of the treasures that exist at the margins with a foraging walk.

Here we looked to our surroundings -and the edges of our surrounding- for things, experiences, insight and inspiration that helped us understand, see and sense things differently.

Our goal was to develop the quality and scope of our noticing so that we can be more skillful in our responses to the challenges we face here and now. To place a high value of alternative interactions, which happen when different systems interact.



Anja Claire Crabb @anglindo
#transtinking tweet ideas, provocations, questions - 50 sustainable fashion pioneers, thinkers, creatives present!



Kate Fletcher @katetfletcher
Interconnectedness runs through all transformational thinking activities @sustfash #transtinking









Challenge conventional aesthetics: beauty of age
Professor Danka Tamburic, Reader in Cosmetic Science, in conversation with Gabriela Daniels, Technical Manager in Science and Beauty

The Beauty of Age project seeks to explore the effects of 'non medical' vs. 'medical' approaches to the management of skin ageing in women over sixty. The aim was to answer the question, "do different approaches to skin ageing produce measurably different effects?" and to explore these in relation to the individual's own 'beauty philosophy' and their personal history.



Learn through making: the craft of knitting
Professor Sandy Black, Professor of Fashion and Textile Design and Technology

Introduction to enabling action through the practice based experimentation of our ideas.

There is often a gap in academic practice and theory which can be fulfilled by understanding the power of making and the unique competencies of the maker. I am building links between the planet, the end user and the designer, using technology to create a considerate design framework which celebrates a practical approach. Through its work, the Centre for Sustainable Fashion is building critical mass, and through the power of many individuals we can stimulate a paradigm shift.



Rebecca Earley @rlearley
A real treat today, & now personally reflecting on how knitting is core activity in (my) family life. Even my dad knits now. #transtinking

Mark changing planet: introduction to Fabulae Romanae
Professor Lucy Orta, Professor of Art, Fashion and the Environment

Fabulae Romana is a collaboration between Lucy and Jorge Orta and Zegna and currently on exhibition at MAXXI National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome. The film is a symbolic excursion across Rome through the eyes of a series of ethereal spirits who draw from archaeological and historical research and observations on the cultural and social map of the city.



‘The CSF event was fantastic. The most beneficial part for me was the rare opportunity of having all the researchers and PhD students in one room to provide an overview of what’s happening in terms of sustainability at LCF. Even more unique was the possibility to actively engage with them through the all the different activities arranged by the students and researchers. As an MA student myself, it was encouraging to witness how sucessfully an event can incorporate interaction and it showed me a less conventional (and more fun!) model of teaching and learning. It makes me want to organize an event of a similar format. Doubtlessly, a huge amount of planning by the CSF went into it to run so smoothly, but it seemed very effortless and flowed.’

Anja Crabb, student, MA Fashion and the Environment



'As a social scientist it is great to attend an event, such as yesterday's, where exploration is the core theme. Very often conferences and events are overloaded with one way communication from speaker to audience, so to do something so engaging was fabulous. The various sessions and activities enabled attendees to get out their comfort zone, use all of their senses and begin thinking and doing in other and more creative ways.

The openness and inclusivity of the day meant that I had the opportunity to speak and work with a number of other attendees from a variety of backgrounds. This is obviously not only great for networking, but also, through the various activities, challenges perceptions and assumptions.

All in all, the day was very inspirational, and I am over the moon to have learnt (if badly) to knit!

Helen Holmes, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, University of Sheffield





Experiential learning: dress up/dress load
Jen Ballie, CSF Researcher, DISC project

Finding ways to unleash the opportunity for personal and collective contribution through the conduit of fashion. This workshop expands upon Dress Up/Download, an interactive fashion project and exercise into sustainability. Through co-design and a DIY approach, new ways to make, style and share clothing will be explored.



Engage fashion's intrigue: drinks to dye for
Katelyn Toth-Fejel, CSF Projects and Co-Director of Permacouture Institute

Drinks to Dye For were served, made (or 'dyed') with seasonal botanicals.
In an exploration of what is seasonal, local, foraged and made from overlooked
resources, Drinks to Dye For draws a connection between the more well known slow
food movement and the possibility for fashion ecologies.



Kate Fletcher @katetfletcher
Drinks to dye for... Natural colour, local resilience #TransThinking @sustash <http://pic.twitter.com/sNPFIUPT>



Pop-up library
Camilla Palestra, CSF Curatorial Assistant

Through a display of books and digital material, the CSF pop-up library served as a mobile and interactive platform to showcase some of the most significant research outcomes by the CSF team including books and other publications that have inspired and transformed CSF thinking and practice over the last years.





Mental foraging: participant curated landscape and journey mapping
Katelyn Toth-Fejel, CSF Project & Zoe Norton, CSF Research Assistant

After the earlier adventure of foraging in the surrounding streets, we turned to mapping the changing landscapes of our interior thoughts. Participants were invited to share questions or responses from the day. These were then charted on paper, physically connecting the disparate ideas where they shared words or phrases.





Learn through making: learn to knit!
Professor Sandy Black, Professor of Fashion and Textile Design and Technology

Demonstrating how we can enable action through the practice based experimentation of our ideas, Sandy helped us discover the skill and fun of creating something from a ball of yarn. Sandy ran a knitting circle. Those who already know how to knit were invited to attend and non knitters were invited to learn.



Caryn Franklin @caryn_franklin
So knitting is activism and craft combined to make craftivism #transtinking



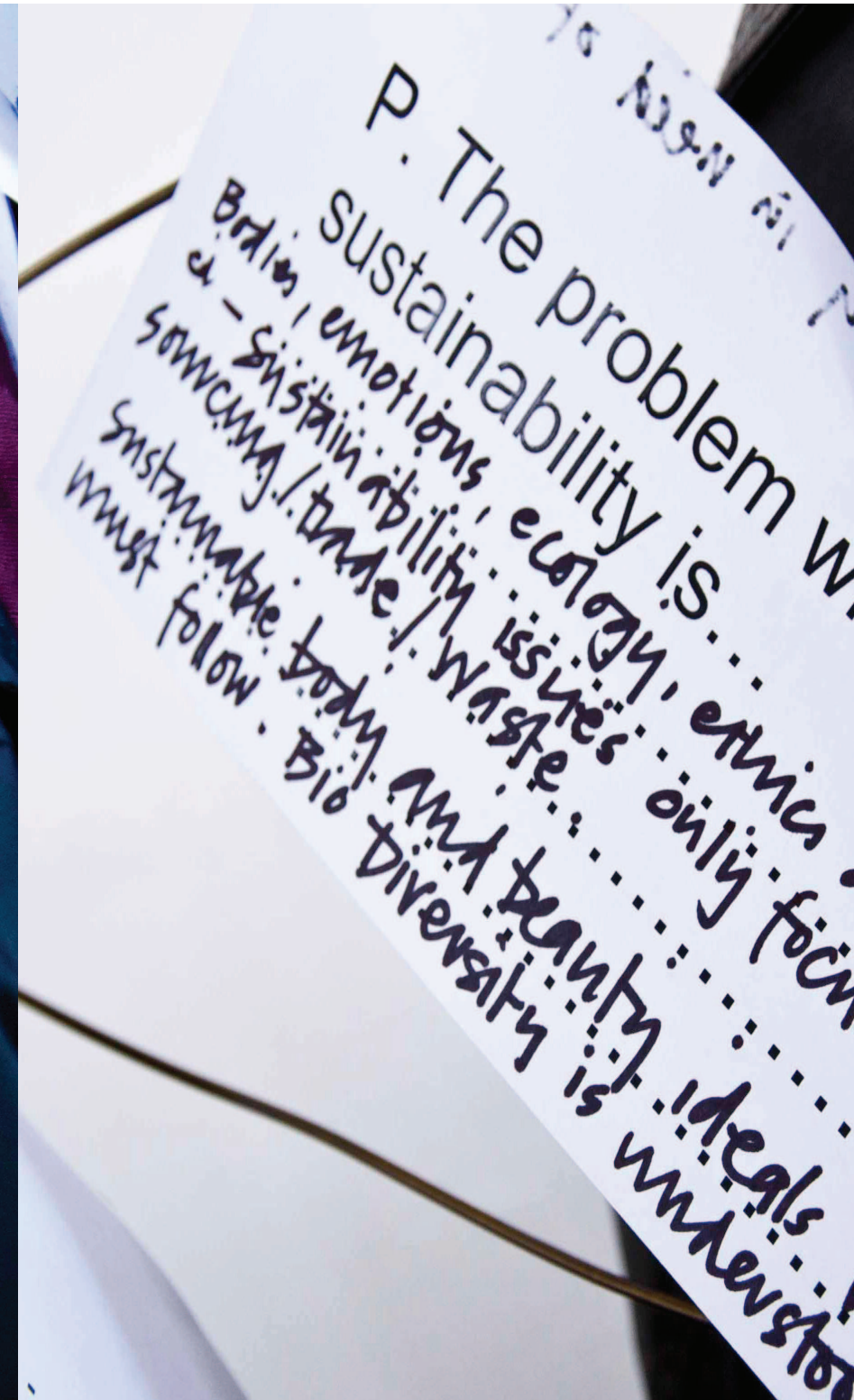
Influence citizen action: washing habits
Emma Rigby, PhD student

An activity to explore washing norms associated with particular garment types. Participants were asked how often particular garment types should be washed between wears, and how often they do wash particular garment types between wears. The activity encouraged actors to become conscious of certain norms and behaviours that they associate with particular garment types.



Mark changing planet: where are you at?
Paul Yuille, PhD student

Where do you see yourself on the path to a sustainable existence? To help signify where guests see themselves, they will categorise the garment they have hung on the hanger, using their own measurement scale and reasoning- during the event some will be invited to explain how the garment reflects their point on the path – or not.





The Waste Space @thewastespace
@sustfash Consumers should use social media to engage with retailers to help bring more sustainable fashions to market. #tranthinking

Oxfam Fashion @oxfamfashion
RT @uniartslondon: "At the heart of sustainability is the ability to think about we not I." @ProfHelenStorey via @sustfashion #tranthinking



Apply commons thinking
Dilys Williams, Director, Centre for Sustainable Fashion

The fundamental quality of our lives depends on those things that cannot be bought or when they are, too often it is with negative effect. Air, water, social fabric, citizen values, out precious common goods get neglected through economic constructs and bad habits. Social quality and cohesion, the joy of making and doing, feeling air as we fling our hands through it eyes closed, these things of value need time, space and change of habit. Fashion habits do change, we need to ensure appropriate change that does not deal in remedial, curative activity but rather places commons thinking at the heart of the criteria for our work.







Credits:

CSF team

Jen Ballie, Sandy Black, Renee Cucoo, Kate Fletcher, Alex McIntosh, Zoe Norton, Lucy Orta, Camilla Palestra, Nina Stevenson, Helen Storey, Danka Tamburic, Katelyn Toth-Fejel, Dilys Williams

Professor Frances Corner, Head of College

Gabriela Daniels, Technical Manager in Science and Beauty

Facilitator

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Anya Crabb, Hannah Van Grimbergen, Coco Noordervliet, Emily Pascoe, Catarina Rodriques, Liz Spencer, Nina Walsh, Thalia Warren

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